

RUSSELL "MAROON" SHOATS



Black Maroons in War and Peace



The slaveholders of the New World faced military challenge not only from slaves in open revolt but also from those who fled the plantations, grouped themselves in runaway communities, and waged guerrilla warfare. These maroons (cimarrones, marrons, quilombos) plagued every slave society in which mountains, swamps, or other terrain provided a hinterland into which slaves could flee. Some maroon communities became powerful enough to force the European powers into formal peace treaties designed to pacify the interior while recognizing the freedom and autonomy of the rebels. Jamaica and Surinam provided the most famous of these cases, which had counterparts in Mexico, Venezuela, and elsewhere. The Portuguese, as early as the seventeenth century, had unsuccessfully offered terms to the great quilombo of Palmares, and even the haughty French came to terms with several thousand maroons near the Spanish border of Saint-Domingue. The terms of the various treaties usually granted the maroons freedom and autonomy in return for a pledge of allegiance to the colonial regime, including the duty to return new runaways and to defend the public order—that is, to suppress slave rebellions. The Catholic countries also required adherence to the Church. Relations between maroons

Hung-Rae 77'

Russell Shoats
AF-3855
1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy.
Waynesburg, PA 15326

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and slaves after promulgation of such treaties became madly denying ambiguous.

Most maroon communities did not have an opportunity to come to terms with the colonial regimes. They remained small units of tens or hundreds, sometimes in loose alliance but sometimes culturally and politically hostile to each other. So long as they remained outside the established colonial order they sympathized with the fate of those still enslaved, for their own guerrilla activities required intelligence and supplies from plantation informers and supporters. Everywhere in the hemisphere maroons at particular times and in particular places provoked desertions and slave revolts; they fought and often defeated the troops sent against them. Whatever their relations with the slaves, their success in defeating white military expeditions said more to the plantation slaves about the fighting quality of black people than any abolitionist pamphlet ever could.

Although varying greatly in time and place, the maroon redoubts in various countries had some common features. Especially when maroons secured periods of peace by compelling the whites to agree to a *modus vivendi*, they built agricultural communities that echoed Africa while developing as original Afro-American formations. Typically, the communities relied on horticulture and raised such crops as yams, sweet potatoes, bananas, plantains, squash, and beans, although they might also add cotton, sugarcane, and especially tobacco for their own use. They rarely if ever achieved self-sufficiency in manufactures and had to depend on others for cloth, implements, and, above all, guns.

When at peace with the whites and sometimes even when at war, these maroon colonies established trade relations with

labour," he wrote, "and let their employment of negroes be very limited. . . . The great object of the scheme is, in the first, a large white population in the interior trained to arms; and in the next, the opening of roads." Reviewing the general history of social banditry, Eric Hobsbawm, in *Primitive Rebels*, adds that the construction of good and fast modern roads alone often undermines banditry. The slave states met these challenges during the nineteenth century. White farmers, armed and stable, constituted a majority of the population and infested most of the South's hills and back country. As the frontier moved west, the terrain favorable to maroons and guerrillas shrank steadily. The military question, then, concerned not merely terrain but the human beings inhabiting it. John Brown, who had taken inspiration and instruction from the experience of the Jamaican maroons, missed the point to his cost when he envisioned impregnable guerrilla bases in the Allegheny Mountains. Long before Harpers Ferry he planned to secure these bases with the support of dissident poor mountain whites, whose racism he seems to have underestimated and whose ideology and politics he certainly misjudged.

The maroons of the United States wrote heroic pages and made a vital contribution to the black struggle against slavery, but under the circumstances their impact had to remain modest. Even those Indian settlements that provided refuge for blacks absorbed them in such a way as to separate them from the slaves culturally as well as physically. By the end of the eighteenth century the danger that large-scale maroon activity would trigger significant slave revolts had passed, although neither maroon activity itself nor white fears ever did.

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what came to the same thing, the maroons spread their power over a geographical area ostensibly dominated by the slaveholders, even the blacks who remained slaves had some protection against the excesses of their masters. In the United States the police power remained overwhelming, and the maroons found themselves constantly on the defensive, without much to offer the slaves as *quid pro quo* for information, supplies, and silence. Since the slaves often tended to identify with blacks from their own plantation community—an identification rebel leaders struggled to overcome—even maroons who avoided plundering them could seem dangerous interlopers.

Yet, the maroons made invaluable contributions to the slaves' struggles for a better life in slavery and especially for escape from slavery. Even H. C. Bruce, the ex-slave who wrote so harshly of maroon terrorism against the quarters, acknowledged that those who deserted the plantations and took to the woods compelled masters to treat their slaves better, if only from fear of even heavier losses of capital and labor. Less tangibly, the maroons provided a constant reminder that slaves could flee and even offer armed resistance to the master class. Whatever their limitations, the maroons failed the slaves primarily in the abstract sense of being too few to provide the kind of spark to rebellion so much in evidence elsewhere in the hemisphere.

The more favorable conditions faced by the maroons in Brazil, Jamaica, Surinam, or Saint-Domingue suggest the special difficulties faced by those of the Old South. R. C. Dallas told us much when he closed his history of the Jamaican Maroon War by recommending that free white farmers be settled in the interior. "Let them depend upon their own

nearby planters and townspeople. Trade relations with the Europeans and the absorption of occasional white adventurers into the community provided some check to the thoroughgoing Africanization. Yet, on the whole these communities came closest of all New World black communities to recapitulating Africa, notwithstanding their remaining essentially American—i.e., new cultural formations. Indeed, they seem to have preserved some features of African culture that were disappearing in Africa itself. But, as Gilberto Freyre argues for Brazil, they also spread European language, religion, and mores, however reshaped, among the Indians of the interior and thereby served as agents of Western cultural expansion.

Family and social life in general recalled African kinship patterns, and political leadership centered in religiously sanctioned "kingsnips." The maroons imposed strict quasi-military discipline and inflicted severe punishments for violations of norms and challenges to authority. Much of the rivalry between competing maroon groups in Jamaica, the Guianas, and elsewhere, which sometimes flared into warfare, originated in the attempt of a leader of one maroon community to impose his will on others.

In different ways and in varying degrees, the maroon communities aimed at restoring a lost African world while incorporating features of Euro-American civilization and specifically plantation culture. The culture that arose on these foundations combined African, European, Amerindian, and slave-quarter elements into new and varied complexes. The Jamaican and Surinam maroons reworked their African inheritance by assimilating useful elements of their American experience; simultaneously, they filtered their American acquisitions through an African prism. African-born slaves,

rather than creoles, sparked the establishment of maroon communities, and the societies they built reflected their origins. Creoles, however, sometimes became maroon leaders in numbers disproportionate to their place in either the maroon or general slave population. And, as Barbara Kopytoff has stressed, increasingly the big maroon communities fell under the leadership of their own creoles—of those born as maroons. The peculiar military and diplomatic problems facing maroons favored the rise of leaders with extensive knowledge of the country and experience in dealing with the authorities. The creoles, however, provided fewer maroons than the Africans did in part because they had advantages of language and familiarity with terrain and could fly to the towns and cities and blend into the free Negro population. Thus, the African predominance among the maroons does not indict the creoles for lack of militancy but, rather, delineates different paths of struggle. But since maroon communities strongly reflected the culture of transplanted Africans, they often presented the creoles with an unsympathetic, strange, and culturally threatening power.

During the eighteenth century the relationship of the maroons to slave revolts and the more general relationship of maroons to slaves became strained. In their formative periods the maroon communities, often fighting for survival, cultivated close relations with those remaining in slavery, relied on them for support, and encouraged them to desert and rebel. Even then, the maroons sometimes alienated the slaves by seizing their women and supplies. In time, two circumstances deepened the antagonism: The colonial powers sometimes offered favorable peace treaties to the maroons in return for capturing runaways and crushing slave revolts; and dur-

Moura, in his valuable book *Rebelões da senzala*, provides a good analysis of the military price paid by the Brazilian *quilombos*, especially those of Palmares, for their socioeconomic consolidation. As the *quilombos* succeeded in organizing production—in cultivating the land to sustain a large community—they generally lost much of their military flexibility, for they had to give up hit-and-run tactics in order to defend their families, homes, and livelihood. Thus, while increasing numbers made possible sturdier defense against frontal assault, they also compelled direct engagement with such assault. Without a mass population of peasants to melt into, in the manner of classical guerrilla warfare, the choices reduced to two: hit-and-run attacks from small bases that could not feed themselves and periodically required dangerous forward movements; or commitment to the stand-up defense of redoubts. The first tactic worked well for small groups. The second became indispensable for large *quilombos* while making them vulnerable to the superior firepower of their enemies. In Florida the second tactic ended in defeat, although not total defeat. Elsewhere, the second tactic commended itself under generally unfavorable conditions. Only with difficulty, if at all, could groups of runaways avoid that parasitical existence which must eventually alienate rebels from their potential mass base.

The maroons of the Caribbean and South America also displayed both tendencies, but those of the United States did so under circumstances that weakened the positive and increased the negative features of their relationship to the slaves. The maroons of the United States rarely could play the protective role assumed by those of Palmares, Jamaica, or Surinam. Where the police power of the regime faltered or,

Fred's house and made up and baked biscuit. Made up a bundle to carry off when the bread was done. Then went to bed to wait for it. He was taken by the servants and carried to the Hospital and put in the stocks. It seems they have been committing depredations through the neighborhood.

In many other cases the slaves helped groups of runaways and identified with their plight. Some planters complained bitterly about the support that the slaves extended to these groups, even hiding them on the plantations. If the runaways had originated in the immediate area and had friends, they could readily expect help. If not, they might gain support by soliciting rather than stealing from the slaves, by avoiding acts of terror, and by appealing to the slaves' sympathy.

Too often, however, the maroons displayed many of the socially destructive and only some of the socially positive features of banditry in general. Rural outlaws, hunted as criminals by the regime, may remain within peasant society as heroes, champions, and avengers. Romance aside, they do often prey on the poor as well as the rich but often will not prey on the poor of their own immediate neighborhoods. Normally, they understand the extent to which they must rely on the sympathy and affection of their own people in order to procure supplies, shelter, and, above all, silence. But since these bandits take their fate into their own hands they cannot easily avoid a certain contempt for the passive masses. They can spring to support a peasant or slave uprising but do not necessarily exude much concern during more placid times.

The degeneration of some runaways into desperadoes who preyed on black and white alike illuminates one of the many anomalies inherent in the southern maroon experience. Clovis

ing the nineteenth century, as creole slaves increased relative to "salt water" slaves, the cultural gap between maroons and slaves widened and generated sharp hostilities and even hatreds. If the maroons sometimes let their treaty obligations to capture runaways slip altogether or met them indifferently, at other times they treated dissident slaves brutally. The record of the Jamaican maroons, although contradictory, displayed a well-known African respect for treaty obligations and word of honor. When they said they would assist the whites against the slaves, they meant to keep their word. Even after the defeat of the rebels during the most famous of the maroon wars in the 1790s, when the British cynically broke their promise not to expel those who surrendered, the maroons, after a brief stay in Nova Scotia, arrived as disgruntled exiles in Sierra Leone in time to put down a rebellion. Those who remained in Jamaica played an important role in crushing the Morant Bay rising of 1865.

During the revolution in Saint-Domingue the maroons sometimes sided with the whites against Toussaint's efforts to compel obedience to his authority. They greeted Napoleon's army, which came to restore slavery, as allies and later gave some support to their old archenemies, the mulattoes, against the blacks. Their course makes no sense except on the simple premise that, above all, they wished to protect their own autonomy against any centralizing power, white or black, reactionary or revolutionary.

Evidence of collaboration with whites notwithstanding, the formation of maroon communities generally had a destructive impact on slavery and provided a spur to slave disaffection, desertion, and rebellion. In Surinam, Venezuela, Jamaica, and elsewhere, maroons inspired slaves to challenge

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white authority and to rebel. When as often happened, the maroons were waging war against the regime, if only because it would not come to terms until being convinced it could not win, they consciously sought allies and reinforcements from among the plantation slaves. In 1733 the British received information that even their ostensibly loyal black troops were conspiring to aid the maroons. The authorities understood that unchecked maroons presented a constant temptation to the slaves to rise in revolt or to desert *en masse*.

Of special significance, maroons sometimes delivered hard blows against the whites in retaliation for particularly brutal treatment of slaves. In Surinam, for example, during the peace negotiations of 1757 a rebel leader rebuked the governor's emissary and asked how the Europeans could claim to be civilized and yet treat their slaves so cruelly. He then offered some advice, which tells us much about the ambiguities of maroon ideology. As Captain Stedman recounts his speech:

We desire you to tell the governor and your court that in case they want to raise no new gangs of rebels, they ought to take care that the planters keep a more watchful eye over their own property, and do not trust them so frequently to the hands of drunken managers and overseers, who . . . are the ruin of the colony and wilfully drive to the woods such numbers of stout, active people, who by their sweat earn your subsistence, without whose hands your colony must drop to nothing, and to whom at last, in this disgraceful manner, you are glad to come and sue for friendship.

The maroon's concern for the welfare of the slaves, as reflected in this remarkable speech, revealed a willingness to leave slavery itself intact. Thus, the outstanding rebel leader, Baron, released a captured white army officer who had recent-

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to slave revolt, in a manner comparable to that in Brazil, Jamaica, Surinam, or even Colombia or Venezuela.

The slaves of the Old South did not, in any case, always look upon their own local runaway groups with favor and sometimes helped to suppress them. The runaways, often called "outliers," typically huddled in small units and may be called "maroons" only as a courtesy. They occupied unfavorable terrain with only minimum security and rarely had an opportunity to forge a viable community life. Consequently, many degenerated into wild desperadoes who preyed on anyone, black, white, or red, in their path. A slave told Olmsted that you could always tell a swamp runaway by his appearance: He would likely be frightened, emaciated, and indecently clothed even by slave standards.

Other slaves and ex-slaves left an unattractive picture of parasites, thieves, and murderers who plagued the quarters as readily as the Big House. Julia Blanks and Green Cumby of Texas described local swamp runaways as mean, frightening, wild men who terrorized the slaves into supplying them with food. "And if you didn't do it," said Mrs. Blanks, "if they ever got you they sure would fix you." According to H. C. Bruce, in his book *The New Man*, slaves often refused to betray organized runaways not because of a sense of solidarity but because of fear of ghastly reprisals. Such reports from black sources make understandable the claims in white sources that slaves often caught or reported runaways, from whom they often suffered heavy depredations. In 1857, for example, Eliza Magruder of Mississippi recorded in her diary:

Two runaways from Claiborne rode in the yard and went in the kitchen and cooked and ate supper. Afterwards went into

SORT OF LIKE WHAT
MANY "NEW AFRICAN" COMMUNITIES
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some features of Indian culture to Afro-America, but for the most part they either became Indians, in essential cultural respects, or stood in the same relationship to rapidly acculturating, semi-white Indian slaveholders that they did to white slaveholders. Indian refuge for runaway slaves provided little or no opportunity for the flowering of an Afro-American alternative to plantation slavery and might, therefore, have reduced the chances for large-scale black maroon activity. The great centers of maroon activity—Palmares, the Jamaican mountains, eastern Saint-Domingue and Cuba, Surinam—either had few Indians or Indians so hostile as to throw the blacks entirely on their own resources.

The geographic dimension deserves closer study, but, as Bennett Wall has observed, the terrain of the Old South put unusual difficulties in the way of would-be maroons, or at least of those who aspired to form large-scale maroon communities. Great swamps did exist, and so did many fastnesses within 150 miles of the coast from Virginia to Louisiana. Indeed, those regions housed bands of white and black outlaws long after the war. The most favorable terrain, however, was in Florida, where individuals and small groups could lose themselves. And as research continues, we do find evidence of more and more small maroon groups. But, again with the exception of Florida, the very geographic isolation and limited means of subsistence drastically reduced both the possibilities for large-scale maroon concentrations—for a North American Palmares—and for decisive military-political intervention in the greater slave society. The question concerns less the existence of *marronage*—it did exist—than of *marronage* on a scale that could affect the politics of the slave society, especially the politics inherent in any encouragement

ly arrived in Surinam and undoubtedly expected execution: "Go away, for you have not been long enough in the colony to have been guilty of mistreating slaves." Another rebel chief, Araby, offered to send his son to Europe for a Dutch education if peace terms could be arranged, and a year later the rebels received the Dutch peace commissioners with a display of aristocratic hospitality.

Maroons, whether in Palmares, Surinam, or Jamaica, themselves often enslaved captives, including those already enslaved by the whites. They seem to have practiced a mild, familial slavery reminiscent of the kind ostensibly practiced in Africa. But those historians who speak of African slavery—or more precisely, of the indigenous forms of bondage called slavery by the Europeans—do not appear to have consulted the slaves, who may have perceived matters differently. No matter how mild the day-to-day existence of slaves in Africa, the threat of ritual execution hung heavily over many. In the maroon communities slaves do appear to have had an easier time, but without their own testimony we can hardly be certain. What remains certain is that many maroon communities did try to influence the white slaveholders to treat their slaves more humanely. The maroons' course thus simultaneously supported the efforts of the slaves to improve their condition and yet accepted the moral and judicial pretensions of the white slaveholders. Their course necessarily inhibited the development of an abolitionist—a revolutionary—ideology while the very existence of the maroon communities was sending revolutionary shock waves through the slave quarters.

From the early days of their conquest of the New World all the European powers applied the policy of "divide and rule."

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Cortes, for example, wrote frankly about his reliance on the support of Indians who had suffered oppression at the hands of the Aztecs and were waiting for a chance to rise. Thereafter, the Europeans did their best to exacerbate tribal hatreds among Amerindians and later Africans, to foment hostility between Indians and Africans, and to set blacks against creoles, creoles against Africans, and maroons against slaves.

The policy produced generally positive effects for the Europeans in part because it had firm roots in traditional hostilities and even new ones that required only little encouragement from outsiders in order to burst into violence. Although imperialists of all ages have mastered the art of turning peoples' ethnic hatreds to advantage, it does them too much honor to accuse them of inventing those hatreds. They have rarely had such power. The Dutch, for example, would have had an even rougher time in Surinam had not one group of maroons adopted an offensive policy toward other groups and driven them into an alliance with the regime.

Indians and black slaves or maroons sometimes supported each other against the whites. The Indians might welcome black runaways or even negotiate a military alliance. Cooperation appeared everywhere, but so did hostility. Amerindians provided the decisive troops against black maroon colonies and slave revolts in Surinam, Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica, and elsewhere, and black troops helped to crush various Indian revolts. Some Indians at war with Europeans stole black slaves for their own use and thereby further complicated Afro-Indian relations. The Island-Carib, for example, conducted heavy slave raids against the British islands in the Caribbean during the seventeenth century, sometimes alone and sometimes in alliance with the French. This record of

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sociate from African ancestry or to reduce its importance, but many gave no hint of lack of black pride and appear matter of fact. Other reports spoke more generally of contacts between slaves and Indians as a normal feature of life. For example, George Fortman, an Indian enslaved in Alabama, said that many presumed black slaves had been Indians' like himself and that the blacks responded with considerable kindness and made him comfortable. Court records, travelers' accounts, and other sources make clear that, in fact, black-Indian miscegenation occurred frequently and that every community had some slaves with Indian ancestry.

These changing cultural relationships of blacks and Indians had profound political repercussions. Some Indian communities became utterly transformed by the entrance of large numbers of blacks, but, typically, the communities absorbed black slaves and runaways into their own culture and social organization. Males predominated among runaways, and marriage to Indian women usually followed as a matter of course. Among the Creeks and other Indian tribes that adhered to the principle of matrilineal descent, absorption of blacks into Indian culture proceeded the more rapidly, and they rose to positions of considerable tribal influence. Since the larger Indian slaveholders usually were part white and these acted as the Indian communities' most determined agents of acculturation and assimilation to white norms, their slaves could not easily develop Afro-American cultural patterns of their own.

In short, whether the blacks entered Indian communities as slaves or free men, they could not reconstruct an Afro-American world or construct an Indo-African one. No doubt they imparted something to Indian culture and transmitted

might have, for the hard blows delivered by the whites kept the blacks and Seminoles on the defensive. The American authorities and the southern slaveholders appreciated the magnitude of the threat, for the Florida colonies posed more than a direct military thrust and a beacon to escaping slaves. The existence of autonomous black communities—the degree of their cultural autonomy within the Seminole political structure remains unclear—created the danger of an alternative black society. Time and circumstance—and brute force—did not, however, permit the example to spread.

Black-Indian contacts included Indian slaveownership and miscegenation. Indians held black slaves in considerable numbers: During the 1820s and 1830s Indians ranked as some of Georgia's biggest slaveholders, and subsequently Greenwood Leflore, the half-white Choctaw chief, emerged as one of Mississippi's biggest planters with four hundred slaves. John Ross, the famous Cherokee chief, owned about one hundred slaves in 1860. By 1860 black slaves comprised 12.5 percent of the population of the Indian Territory, although most lived on small farms. Some Indians, notably the Chickasaws, had a reputation as hard masters, but most enjoyed a reputation among whites and blacks for being generous, kind, and easy-going. The Creeks, in particular, often worked their slaves in arrangements more suggestive of share-cropping than slavery and sometimes adopted them into the tribe. The Cherokees and some other Indians made alliances with the Confederacy, although an exposed geographical position and Byzantine factional politics largely determined their decision.

The narratives of ex-slaves contain many assertions of Indian ancestry. Some of these may have reflected a wish to dis-

antagonism does not negate Roger Bastide's argument that, for the long run, Afro-Indian contacts shaped a wide-ranging syncretization and the rise of Afro-Indian communities.

Throughout the New World free Negroes and even loyal slaves periodically helped to crush slave revolts and maroon bastions. In Africa black troops provided an indispensable supplement to white in the coastal slave depots, and in the Caribbean, in particular, the loyalty of some slaves proved adequate to frustrate the militancy of others. The extensive report from Surinam by Captain Stedman sheds light on the more general use of loyal slaves against rebels and might, with only a shift in details, have come from Brazil or other countries. After having come to terms with two groups of maroons, the Dutch continued their brutal treatment of the slaves and provoked a new rebellion in 1772. A majority of the planters fled to Paramaribo in panic while the authorities made the desperate decision to form units of manumitted slaves to send against the rebels.

The black loyalists astonished the whites by their conduct under fire and, in Captain Stedman's words, "performed wonders." These three hundred or so blacks saved the day for the European slaveholders until Dutch troops could arrive from Europe, for the local colonial troops had proved inadequate. The authorities had picked their slave troops carefully from among especially strong volunteers with no record of recalcitrance. Owners received full payment in compensation. The Rangers, as the blacks came to be called, staked out an "implacable enmity against the rebels" and checked their advance with great ferocity. The rebels returned the hatred: They sometimes spared white prisoners of war but summarily executed all Rangers.

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Captain Stedman explains the Rangers' tenacity as a consequence of their desire to earn freedom. He also observes that, once having made the decision to fight on the side of the Dutch, they had no avenue of retreat, for the rebels poured on them that special hatred reserved for traitors; and any attempt to switch sides would have qualified them as traitors to the whites with similar results. The Rangers earned their freedom in this fratricidal struggle not only by fighting with extraordinary courage and élan but by teaching the white troops the art of colonial warfare. According to Captain Stedman, these newly emancipated slaves understood the rudiments of warfare on the Surinam countryside much better than the Dutch army, which had the sense to study the methods of their despised "inferiors."

Although the Bush Negroes—those whose previous successful efforts had won them peace treaties and territory of their own—hated the Rangers and probably sympathized with the rebels, they stood by their treaties and refused to enter the war. In view of the precariousness of the colonials' position before the arrival of reinforcements from Europe, a maroon rising might have tipped the scales decisively and transformed Surinam into an early version of Saint-Domingue.

Brazilian slaves wrote an especially impressive story of guerrilla resistance. In 1770, for example, the Portuguese crushed the *quilombo* of Carlota in Mato Grosso, although the rebels put up, in the words of Raimondo Nina Rodrigues, "a brilliant defense." The most compelling of these maroon war camps arose during the seventeenth century with the name Palmares. For the greater part of a century (ca. 1605–1695) runaway slaves and their offspring, swelling to an esti-

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countered. The Seminole Wars, caused in no small part by the unwillingness of the Indians to surrender blacks they regarded as part of their own community, pitted blacks as well as Indians against the whites, who had some free Negro allies of their own. Some blacks assumed commanding positions in the Seminole military effort. They fought so tenaciously that the American authorities bluntly characterized the war as primarily a struggle against black maroons and their Indian allies.

The Second Seminole War (1835) cost the American military 1,600 lives, with many more wounded, as well as a staggering thirty to forty million dollars. The United States had won another of its wars, but not without the galling admission that it could not wholly impose its will on the Afro-Indian alliance. The Americans had to make the major concession of allowing the blacks to move west with the Seminoles. In its scope and heroism the black struggle deserves to rank with that of the maroons of Jamaica or Surinam, although it did not make nearly so great an impact on the wider slave society.

The magnificent unity of the blacks and Seminoles had precedents, the most notable of which was the black support for the great rising of the Natchez in Louisiana in 1729. In the aftermath of that event, the whites moved to placate the blacks and drive a wedge between them and their Indian allies. They scored some success, but, as the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée demonstrated anew in 1795, the threat of black-Indian cooperation remained acute so long as the French and Spanish held Louisiana.

The struggle of the blacks and Seminoles in any case did not have the electrifying impact on the plantation South it

THE "MOST COSTLY (IN LIVES AND WEALTH) OF ALL THE INDIAN WARS."

had little in common except when, as during the Seminole War, the excesses and tactical blunders of those who oppressed them drove them together.

The Seminole Wars, the most dramatic and significant ventures in black-Indian cooperation against the whites, occurred in Florida, which until its annexation by the United States in 1819, and especially when under the Spanish, had provided a haven for runaway American slaves. The first known slave conspiracy in South Carolina—that of 1720—was inspired by the possibilities presented by Spanish power across the border, and runaways to Florida built forts and colonies during the 1730s. An agreement between Spain and the United States in 1791 to return runaways broke down almost immediately. American efforts to annex Florida in the first decade of the nineteenth century, featured by unsavory plotting with Spanish traitors, resulted in part from a persistent concern with the runaway problem.

Without the cooperation of the Spanish, and for a brief period the English, authorities, the blacks could not easily have established themselves in Florida, but their main reliance fell upon the Seminole Indians. Black runaways built small colonies of their own during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries within the political framework of the Indian nation. The Seminoles did buy some black slaves in imitation of white practice, but in effect they worked their slaves as dependent share croppers. The blacks slowly insinuated themselves, along with the runaways, into Indian life. When American marines invaded Florida in 1812, Indians and blacks repulsed them in a joint effort that foreshadowed the war to come. American officers then as later regarded the blacks as the toughest and most determined enemies they en-

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mated—if suspiciously high—population of twenty thousand, defended their reconstituted African community against the blows of the Netherlands and Portugal, two of the greatest powers of the age. The Dutch sent two expeditions against Palmares and the Portuguese more than a dozen before they finally crushed it. Slaves had long slipped from the sugar plantations to the backcountry, and Palmares may well have consisted of several discontinuous settlements over time. The movement picked up dramatically in the wake of the Dutch invasion of Pernambuco and the resultant weakening of the Portuguese slaveholders' regime.

The history of Palmares remains obscure despite such excellent studies as those of Edison Carneiro, Ernesto Ennes, and R. K. Kent, and the publication of valuable documents. The sources, unfortunately, betray too much special pleading from the colonial side and offer virtually nothing from the rebel side. As a result, the political and military history of the decisive period, 1672–1695, has emerged, at least in outline, but the social and cultural development of the *quilombo* itself cannot be described without considerable speculation.

In essential respects the Palmarinos seem to have tried to reconstruct an African society. Although blacks from various parts of Africa converged in Palmares, the Bantu-speaking Angolan-Congolese peoples apparently predominated. After a period of reliance on raids for women and supplies, launched against the plantation districts and the Indian settlements of the interior, the Palmarinos began to produce their own food and tools. The *quilombo* became more economically self-sufficient and economically complex and supported skilled mechanics and craftsmen. Fragmentary evi-

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dence suggests that the economic organization adhered to family-based West African norms.

Politically, the Palmarinos concentrated power in the hands of a small group of chiefs. They practiced a "Catholicism" unconnected with the Church and heavily laden with African beliefs and practices, although little definite is known about the content and organization of this syncretic religion or its place in the political and social system. The Palmarinos' attitude toward slavery itself recalled African origins. They enslaved those whom they had to take from the plantations by force, while welcoming as brothers and sisters those who defected to them. That they practiced traditional African rather than commercial slavery may be extrapolated from the general economic organization and from their willingness to free slaves who volunteered to help raid the plantations.

Until the phase of the long struggle, the Palmarinos apparently spread themselves thin across a large area. For a long time their dispersal of population served them well against the Dutch and Portuguese invasions. The destruction of one or more centers resulted in regroupment and the resumption of a general guerrilla warfare that wore down their enemies. In the last phase, however, the invaders improved their staying power and hammered the Palmarinos piece-meal. The beleaguered Palmarinos concentrated their forces at Macaco, their chief redoubt, but succumbed to the frontal assault of white and Indian troops.

The Palmarinos' success in developing their economy led to an important alliance with some of the neighboring slave-holding planters. In return for guarantees against raiding, some planters entered into trade relations. Whether the Palmarinos returned runaways from certain plantations is not

FROM THIS AND OTHER WAYS
"LOYALTY" WAS JUDGED.

Black Maroons in War and Peace

helped to crush rebellious slaves, and armed slaves helped subdue the Indians. As Gary B. Nash writes in *Red, White, and Black*:

By fashioning the harshest slave code of any of the colonies, by paying dearly for Indian support at critical moments, and by militarizing their society, white Carolinians were able to restrict the flow of blacks into the backcountry. The Cherokee hill country never became the equivalent of the Maroon hideaways in Jamaica or the Brazilian *quilombos* as a refuge for runaway slaves as many Carolinians feared.

Some slaves won their freedom by fighting on the white side during Indian wars. The employment of black troops against the Indians faded during the late antebellum period only to reemerge on a large scale during the postbellum campaigns in the West. For better or worse, black troops achieved a splendid military record in the federal government's campaigns to crush the last great Indian nations. Thus, we find the Indians' grotesque depiction of the black troops as "black white men." In antebellum times Indians also suffered at the hands of black slaves who acted as spies and translators for white speculators engaged in swindles and land expropriation. The Indians, especially those in South Carolina and Louisiana, returned these compliments by helping to crush slave rebellions and by hunting down runaway slaves. Effective white manipulation of Indians and blacks against each other reduced possibilities for the organization of stable maroon colonies.

More than white manipulation divided Indians from blacks, for they represented different cultures, sometimes appeared almost as strange to each other as to the whites, and

THE MUCH CELEBRATE
"BUFFALO SOLDIER" THAT NEED
TO BE SEEN AS TOOLS OF IMPERIALIST OPPRESSION!

ANOTHER COMPLETE LIE BY THE
AUTHOR! AFRICAN + NATIVE
CULTURES ALWAYS HAD MUCH IN
COMMON: SPIRITUALLY, ECONOMICALLY, ETC.

the whites expressed concern about black-Indian collaboration and took measures to prevent it. White fears rested on some evidence of sympathy and mutual support. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries various Indian tribes ignored treaty obligations to return runaways and provided refuge for them instead. During the nineteenth century individual runaway slaves and even small groups sought and received protection from some Indian communities especially in the southwestern slave states.

The classic policy of divide and rule poisoned black-Indian relations from the beginning. Mutual sympathy among blacks, Indians, and poor whites had taken root during the colonial period, especially during the seventeenth century, for Indians as well as blacks suffered enslavement and many whites worked as indentured servants under conditions of oppression that sometimes rivaled those of the slaves. From time to time this sympathy flowered into collaboration, but as Indian slavery and white indenture waned, the isolation of the blacks set in. In colonial Virginia under the English and in Louisiana under the French, slaves went into battle against Indians who were fighting an ostensible European advance which in fact was an Afro-European advance all along the frontier. In colonial South Carolina the slaveholders lived in constant dread of Afro-Indian collaboration.

Blacks and Indians did sometimes establish alliances against the whites; in general, however, they remained strangers to each other, divided in their interests and suspicious of each other's strange ways. The whites never wholly succeeded in overcoming their nightmares, but they did succeed in playing the one against the other. Indian troops

clear. The alliance must always have been shaky, for so long as Palmares existed, it provided a beacon to slaves who dared to risk flight.

In 1678 the regime inflicted heavy losses on the Palmarinos, whose supreme chief, the ganga-zumba, sued for peace. The Portuguese offered terms they considered generous, maybe too generous, including recognition of the freedom of the Palmarinos, appointment of the ganga-zumba as a royal field commander, and confirmation of the Palmarinos' claims to territory already being eyed greedily by planters and merchants. The Palmarinos in return had to give up some territory, return runaways, and help suppress slave and Indian revolts. One group of Palmarinos, under the leadership of the zumbí (war chief) and other younger men, repudiated the agreement, executed the ganga-zumba, and resumed the struggle. Not until 1695 did a powerful coalition of paulista ruffians, hastily recruited northerners, and a larger army of Indians, put an end to Palmares. The zumbí, referred to in one Portuguese document as a "Negro of singular courage, great spirit and persistence [negro de singular valor, grande animo e constancia]," was taken alive, although wounded, and subsequently executed.

he zumbí's reasons for repudiating the treaty of 1678 remain open to speculation. Just as some of the Portuguese authorities feared that the Palmarinos would break their word, so the Palmarinos clearly distrusted Portuguese intentions. The rich lands of Palmares had already attracted white interest, and even the limited land cessions provided for by the treaty may have exceeded what the bolder Palmarinos thought safe. Then too, despite their recent victories, the Portuguese had paid dearly for the long war and confronted

EVERY NOV. 20TH IS A
"HOLIDAY" IN BRAZIL IN HIS HONOR; THE DATE OF HIS DEATH.

From Rebellion to Revolution

internal divisions between *Paulistas* and northerners and between local planters anxious for peace and others ready for risky adventures. The *zumbi* may have calculated that the Portuguese would crack during a protracted war, especially since the relations between the *Paulistas* and the Indians, who provided an indispensable force, were deteriorating. The *zumbi* and his followers may have objected to playing policemen for the Portuguese against the slaves. Whatever the reasons, the decision to stake everything on a war to the death ended in death for the rebel leaders and their boldest followers, in the enslavement of many others, and in the division of Palmares among the invading whites. A formidable threat to the Portuguese slaveholding regime had ended.

The Jamaican maroons dated from the 1650s, when the English took the island from Spain. Some slaves took advantage of the struggle between the European powers to fly to the interior, where cool weather offered a healthful climate conducive to the building of stable communities. These early maroon colonies suffered hard military blows and succumbed only to be replaced by others. By the time the Spanish left Jamaica some 1,500 maroons, according to Bryan Edwards' shaky estimate, had ensconced themselves in the virtually inaccessible mountainous interior. Their greatest military weakness stemmed from their geographical division, for large groups had occupied different terrain without effective contact. The English, upon consolidating their power, offered one group autonomy in return for support in suppressing slave revolts and in defending the island against invasion. In time mass defections troubled the English plantation owners, much as they had previously troubled the Spanish. In 1660 the slaves in Clarendon Parish rose in insurrection and

Black Maroons in War and Peace

destroyed settlements and kept the runaways from consolidating strong guerrilla bases. By the late antebellum period the maroon problem in the area had shrunk to the status of a nuisance. In Georgia and South Carolina during the eighteenth century a similar pattern unfolded, with small groups of maroons waging sporadic warfare, suffering blows, and regrouping without being able to develop and consolidate major war camps like those of Palmares or the interior colonies of Jamaica, Surinam, or Saint-Domingue.

During the nineteenth century the center of maroon activity shifted to the southwest, especially Louisiana, and to Florida, where the Seminole Indians offered refuge to fleeing blacks and produced a major confrontation with white power. Reports of activity ("outrages," to use the favorite word of the authorities) by small groups of runaways continued to filter in from the seaboard slave states, but they no longer provoked the deep and widespread fear they once had. In the west, maroons in Tennessee caused much concern during the early decades of the nineteenth century, and small groups operated in the Gulf states on a scale just large enough to keep many communities nervous. The peak of nineteenth century maroon activity came during the war, when long hidden groups appeared in full view and many others arose among slaves deserting the plantations. In South Carolina especially, the federal invasion of the coast and the favorable geography of the low country spurred a rash of armed and combative maroon colonies.

The relationship of the black slaves and maroons with the Indians, who controlled parts of the interior and provided an alternative to white domination, helps explain the limited effect of maroon activity in the South. From the earliest days

"THE CIVIL WAR"

challenge British power without a mass base of sympathy among the slaves and without even the support of other big maroon groups. The Accompong maroons helped to suppress the rising, as did some slaves whom the British armed for the war. Without help from the plantations, the Trelawney maroons had to fight alone. The rebels, several hundred strong, fought heroically, defied the troops of the world's greatest power, and terrorized a large part of the island. Without adequate allies, however, and facing the threat of vicious dogs from Cuba to be used to hunt them down, they eventually had to sue for peace. The whites had had reason to fear another Saint-Domingue in 1795, for British troops had been sent from Jamaica to suppress slave revolts in the French Caribbean, and unified black action would have had excellent prospects. The policy of divide and rule had triumphed.

Maroons harassed the slaveholders of the Old South from the seventeenth century to the end of their regime. The authorities in Virginia, for example, expressed concern in the 1670s over the possibilities of slave revolt but, even more, concern over the activities of small groups of maroons in every part of the colony. During the eighteenth century the authorities put down a vigorous maroon colony in the Blue Ridge mountains as well as smaller groups but had constant trouble with others in the Dismal Swamp.

The Dismal Swamp area along the Virginia-North Carolina border provided runaways with a favorable location on which to build houses, plant crops, and raise pigs and fowl. Toward the end of the seventeenth century the maroon groups had grown larger and more stable and evoked white fears of a general black insurrection. Punitive expeditions

retreated into the interior. Those left behind sent the rebels information and supplies from their provision grounds until stable and self-sufficient maroon colonies could take shape. One maroon group, after a period of defeat, united behind Cudjoe, in R. C. Dallas' words, "a bold, skillful, and enterprising man." Steadily reinforced by deserters from the plantations, some of them in large groups, the maroons consolidated community discipline and organized an elaborate intelligence apparatus on the plantations by relying on the obrahmen and those under their influence.

The British governor, Edward Trelawney, read the signs and, in 1738, offered peace terms. Cudjoe kissed the feet of the governor's emissary and begged pardon, although this self prostration, itself probably no more than a traditional courtesy, accompanied assurances that the emissary had brought satisfactory terms. After these maroons agreed to terms then other maroons, under another able leader, Quao, followed suit while making clear that necessity, not preference, dictated their course.

The agreement between Governor Trelawney and Cudjoe—"Articles of Pacification with the Maroons of Trelawney Town, concluded March 1, 1738"—began on a significant note: "In the name of God, amen. Whereas Captain Cudjoe, Captain Accompong, Captain Johnny, Captain Cuffy, Captain Quaco . . ." The governor understood that he was negotiating with "captains," not "niggers." The stated purpose of the treaty was "peace and friendship." It granted freedom and autonomy to the maroons along with possession of designated lands. The maroons obtained hunting rights, as well as the right to cultivate their lands as they wished, but agreed to sell the produce in towns only in accordance with prescribed

DURING THE "50 CALLED REVOLUTIONARY WAR OF 1776, TWO OF THE HANDS OF AFRICAN FUGHT FOR A PROMISE OF FREEDOM - ON THE BRITISH SIDE. MANY BECAME MAROONS AFTER THE BRITISH LOST.

"THE REVOLUTIONARY 'GEORGIANS' IN THE U.S. MADE THIS MISTAKE IN THE LAST GENERATION, ALSO."

NOT NEARLY OVERSAYS THE "DECADES" OF PUNISHING "GEORGIANS" IN THE MAROONS EXCELLED AT:

rules. The maroons agreed to pay homage to the governor; to submit to the jurisdiction of white courts in interracial disputes; and to qualify their control of justice in their own territory by petitioning for white permission to inflict the death penalty. Two white men, appointed by the governor, were to live among the maroons more or less as governors-general; simultaneously, Captain Cudjoe achieved official recognition as an officer of the Crown.

The maroons' most important concessions transcended these ceremonial matters and acquiescence in a measure of extraterritoriality. They agreed to help repel foreign invasion and to return all runaway slaves to their plantations: More ominously:

[Sixth, that the said Captain Cudjoe and his successors do use their best endeavors to take, kill, suppress, or destroy either by themselves, or jointly with any other number of men, commanded on that service by his excellency, the Governor, or commander in chief for the time being, all rebels where-soever they be, throughout this island, unless they submit to the same terms of accommodation granted to Captain Cudjoe and his successors.]

This compromise marked a new stage in the relations of the maroons and the slaves. The earlier alliance, based on slave support for the maroons and maroon efforts to assist runaways, gave way to antagonism. Relations had, however, not proceeded smoothly even during the 1690s and the early eighteenth century, for free Negroes and slaves promised emancipation had provided some of the toughest troops sent against the maroons. The maroons kept their word to the British: They ruthlessly tracked down runaways, killing



them so often that the British had to offer a premium for those taken alive; and they smashed new runaway colonies with such efficiency that they jeopardized their own survival, for no significant additions to maroon ranks occurred. And, as Barbara Kopytoff has demonstrated, they opened themselves to a complex process of internal deterioration and a steady erosion of their political cohesion and autonomy. The British authorities had no doubt that the military prowess of the maroons was playing a major role in discouraging slave revolts. Moreover, although the treaty terms forbade the maroons from owning slaves, they did buy some without provoking the intervention of the authorities. Maroons continued to marry slaves and to cultivate sympathetic relations with some, but increasingly the two groups diverged and passed over to animosity.

In 1795 the slaves claimed revenge. Two maroons, generally acknowledged as trouble-makers, fell into British hands and received whippings, which slaves inflicted on behalf of the authorities. The maroons were enraged. They cared nothing for the culprits, whom they themselves would probably have hanged, but they refused to tolerate the use of despised slaves as agents of justice. They reiterated their loyalty to the Crown but demanded, "Do not subject us to insult and humiliation from the very people to whom we are set in opposition." The origins of the rising of the Trelawney maroons remain obscure, although maroon suspicion of changes in British administration, British fears of a new Haiti, stemming in part from reports of French agents among the blacks, and growing quarrels over landholding all played a part. The insulting incident triggered the outbreak of the great Maroon War of 1795-1796, in which the Trelawney maroons had to

"ISRAEL" IS SLOWLY FORCING THE "PALESTINIANS" TO ADOPT A SIMILAR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY POSTURE.